

March 2, 2012

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

We, the undersigned faith-based organizations, are deeply concerned by the broken immigration system's impact on families, communities, and the U.S. economy. When immigration enforcement actions tear apart families, our churches, synagogues, mosques, and other local organizations are on the front lines to provide housing, food, counseling, and other forms of support and ministry.

We therefore welcome the Administration's process to review all pending cases before U.S. Immigration Courts and administratively close low priority cases, such as individuals who are close family members of U.S. citizens, have lived in the United States since a young age, or are military service members. However, we write to express the following concerns about the implementation of this new policy as a nationwide expansion begins to take place:

- **Individuals whose cases are closed should be eligible to receive work authorization.** It does not make sense to allow immigrants to remain temporarily in the United States, but then prevent them from working legally and supporting themselves and their families.
- **The U.S. government must make information publicly available to immigrants and communities, including detained individuals whose cases have not yet been reviewed.** While some immigrants have legal representation, many do not. An estimated 84% of immigrant detainees lack legal representation. DHS should engage in a public information campaign to explain the policy and how individuals can obtain more information. Misinformation about the review will undermine the process and expose individuals to harm from unethical notarios.
- **Individuals who continue to pursue their legal claims or are not eligible for prosecutorial discretion, while retaining full access to due process, should not face prolonged court delays.** During the initial pilot review, the Baltimore Immigration Court rescheduled some immigration hearings up to two years later. These kinds of delays are emotionally, mentally, and financially taxing on immigrants waiting to have their cases heard by the immigration courts.

As people of faith, we urge the government to employ this prosecutorial discretion initiative consistently and fairly to protect families and the God-given dignity of every person. If implemented correctly, we hope that this review process leads to a more humane and fiscally responsible immigration enforcement strategy.

Sincerely,

National Organizations
American Friends Service Committee
American Jewish Committee

Bread for the World
Church World Service, Immigration and Refugee Program
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
Jubilee Campaign USA
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Network, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
PICO National Network
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Union for Reform Judaism
World Relief

Organizations by State

Arkansas

Arkansas Interfaith Alliance, State-wide

Arizona

Arizona Ecumenical Council, Public Policy Commission
Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Tucson, AZ
Tucson Samaritans, Southern Arizona

California

African Methodist Episcopal Church, Los Angeles District
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Los Angeles – CLUE-LA
Justice For Our Neighbors Regional Office & Clinic the Bay Area Immigration Taskforce

Florida

Gainesville Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice, Gainesville, FL
Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Gainesville, FL

Iowa

Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa

Minnesota

Immigration Task Force of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ
Interfaith Coalition on Immigration – Minnesota (ICOM)

New York

American Jewish Committee, New York
Sisters of the Presentation, New Windsor, NY

North Carolina

Episcopal Campus Ministry Raleigh, Raleigh, NC

Sisters of Mercy South Central Community, North Carolina

Pennsylvania

Advocacy for Justice and Peace Committee of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Texas

Dominican Sisters of Houston, Houston, TX

Wisconsin

Sinsinawa Dominicans, Office of Peace and Justice, Sinsinawa, Wisconsin

Regional

Central/Southwest

Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ, Arizona, New Mexico and El Paso County
in Texas

Northeast

Sisters of Mercy New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Justice Team State of New York